1:Sanders Z-5,4 (1952-1959) 1962 EH1 Greece EH1

the buildings around the plateia catch the eye. The church with its bell tower and dome is easily spotted. The cemetery is at the edge of the village, we are told, "back there where you passed the row of tall cypress trees." The school is usually nearby. If school is in session, then the noise of children at recess can be distinctly heard, as can the bell which calls them indoors. A sign rather than the size of the building announces the headquarters of the local village council. Many villages have a cooperative society, identified by a sign on its office near the plateia. Other coffeehouses and one or two small grocery stores account for the rest of the buildings on the square.[2] The universality of these coffeehouses and small shops is shown in Table 1, presenting the services provided in eight villages of more than a thousand in population, in the early 1950s.[3] Some of the items deserve fuller explanation.

The flour mills. In the case of the Xanthe village, four of the flour mills were built during the occupation, the other two long before then. These mills operate not more than a total of thirty days each during the year because local grain production is very limited and also because local people get their ration flour ready-ground from the government.

The one flour mill in the Mesolongi village has an old engine which uses charcoal for fuel and which hardly works more than two days a week. Most of the time it is under repair. Many of the villagers are therefore obliged to take their grain to the mills of neighboring villages.

The bakeries. In the larger villages these find sufficient business to stay open not only to sell their goods but to bake throughout the day for the village housewives, who bring in either unbaked loaves of bread or some dish for the ovens. With fuel so scarce in many parts of the country, it is much more economical at times for a family to take an uncooked casserole to the commercial baker than to try to bake it at home.

The village stores. In one of the Macedonian villages the yearly gross sales of the seven stores run from just less than $700 for the smallest one to $3330 for the two largest. These same two largest ones extend over $1000 of credit each year, while the smallest one gives no credit.

The owners of these stores purchase their goods directly from wholesale dealers in Salonica and bring them to the village with trucks or horsecarts. They do not hire any outside laborers, but use their sons or family members for the work. All stores sell for cash, credit, or take different farm products as payment. The credit extended to farmers by the different shopkeepers depends on the financial situation and the economic standing of the customers. More credit is given to farmers who own livestock because they are able to pay back their debts at more frequent intervals than ordinary farmers, who can pay back their debts only once a year after harvest. No direct interest is charged on credit goods, but their price is usually such as to include the interest.

The studies cited contain much more information about these village stores. The stock carried may include food, clothing, and farm implements.

:Sanders Z-5,4 (1952-1959) 1962 EH1 Greece EH1

Even when death is there, there is help. Who can bury the dead by himself? The village all cry together, they all suffer together, and the whole village buries him. He too is not far away from them. His soul roams around them and, as they say themselves, he watches them.[2]

The Agricultural Cooperative Movement in Greece

One could logically argue that a people with as many kinds of mutual aid as the Greek villagers should take readily to the cooperative organization designed to assist cooperators, through organized efforts, to achieve goals which they could not hope to satisfy individually. But the transition from informal mutual aid to an organized cooperative proves much more difficult than one would at first imagine. In the first place, since the village mutual-aid patterns are a "here and now" undertaking, those participating can see the immediate results of their labor and can hold the person helped accountable to return assistance to them when needed. The formal cooperative organizations, on the other hand, have to set goals which are removed both in time and place from the average peasant. Not only are the centers of financial control and the markets distant, but the member has to wait for benefits to accrue in the case of a marketing cooperative. In a credit cooperative, the loan received is more tangible, but its attainment has probably seemed to the peasant a long, laborious procedure.

The transition from village mutual aid to the formal cooperative organization is difficult, in the second place, because the *formal* organization itself is an urban rather than a village development. To participate in and guide an organization takes as much "know-how" as repairing a tractor or managing a flock. But it is a different kind of skill from any which the peasant has been trained to use, and he is therefore either ill at ease or grossly inefficient when he tries to work with such a new social mechanism. Parliamentary procedure, the keeping of books and membership lists, and the preparation of reports go on around him all of the time, but he is seldom called upon to participate in such activity. This means that, as a member, he is apt to be passive and apathetic; he is also apt not to understand much of what is done in the cooperative organization and is therefore chronically critical of management, the government, and perhaps the whole idea of formal cooperatives in general. Once he has learned to deal with the social mechanism of the organization, he is much more self-assured and agreeable, but getting to this point takes a great deal of time for most villagers.

But perhaps a third difficulty in the transition from local mutual aid to membership in the cooperative society is most crucial. Basically the mutual-aid groups consist of family members and neighbors; only occasionally do they even call upon others in the village. The cooperative association makes an immediate leap beyond family and neighborhood to encompass men from the whole village — men who know each other but who have not

1:Sanders Z-5,4 (1952-1959) 1962 EH1 Greece EH1

not well is ever present; and the dying man laments that he must see the sun no more, nor the light of the moon, the mountains, the shade of plane-trees, and the cool fountain because in Hades there breaks no dawn, and sings no bird, and no fountains of water flow." [19]

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This same theme is brought out in the tradition which the villagers call the "water of forgetfulness."

> Each person upon dying goes to the underworld. There he starts crying and is in despair because he died and had to leave the world which still seems so sweet to him. The other dead laugh at him. This happens for just one day because the other dead feel sorry for the newcomer, take him to a spring and tell him to drink some water. After he has had some he in his turn forgets the upper world and laughs at the newcomers who come later on. This happens to all who die.[20]

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When a person is believed to be dying, a candle is lit, probably so the soul will be sure to have some light as it moves into the other world. If any of this candle remains after a person dies, according to some village people, for three successive days you must put water in a little coffee cup and light the candle for ten minutes after sunset. You then take the water and throw it outside where nobody will be apt to walk on it. You also cut a narrow piece from the shroud and tie three knots in it, placing it in front of the icon. For three days you untie one of the knots and then sew the piece of cloth in the shirt of one of the male members of the family, who wears this piece until the shirt wears out. In the Naupaktos area, after a person dies all windows and doors are closed so death cannot get out. One person of the household shouts, "Death, leave the old man [or whoever is dead]." This is repeated many times in the hope that death can hear. It is done, the people say, to keep death from coming again to take someone else from that home.[21] Such shouting is not the custom in all parts of Greece, however.

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What one does find quite generally in the rural areas, however, is the *myriologion*, or funeral dirge, which the women of the household and those from the neighborhood begin to sing as soon as death has come. Some of these have been conventionalized to the point that several women may all know the same dirge for a husband, child, or mother, and sing parts of it in turn rocking back and forth; in some parts of Greece the women improvise dirges in keeping with the prescribed musical form. These songs, sung in the house before burial, at the grave at stated intervals after death, or even as a woman is passing by the cemetery, may consist of questions put to the dead: "Why did you leave us?" "Why did you go so soon?" "How do you think the house can get on without you?" [22] Those myriologia that have traditional content passed on from generation to generation are the source of many of the popular beliefs about the afterlife, and they illustrate as well as any aspect of Greek rural life the persistence of pre-Christian

1:Sanders Z-5,4 (1952-1959) 1962 EH1 Greece EH1
Vlach EH15.

traits. From time to time, the men of the village may scoff at these myriologia as "women's business," and they certainly do not join in the singing, but many of them would feel uncomfortable if these dirges were not sung in their homes when occasion demanded. In the cities such customs as these are dying out, but not among the rural people.

The body is washed in wine and prepared for burial, with the interment usually taking place within twenty-four hours. A most vividly recalled procession was that of a seventeen-year-old boy in Metsovo (Epirus) who had been killed the day before by a land mine left over from the guerrilla war. This was a Wallachian (Koutso-Vlach) town, mentioned in my description of the life of the shepherd. We watched the procession form just outside the church. First came a boy carrying the lid of the coffin, since it is still customary to leave the coffin open as the procession moves through the streets of the town; then the altar boys carrying the banners, followed by three priests in their liturgical robes, then the coffin — all in white — carried by six young men in black homespun. Next followed the boy's father, supported by his relatives, a weeping fourteen-year-old brother, then a score of other men. The children from the school playground went up to watch the procession pass. Shortly afterwards, the mother, loudly wailing, came out of the church, also supported by her relatives and about forty or fifty women dressed in their traditional holiday costumes, brilliant despite the absence of much of their finery and the heavy accent of black trimmings. They formed a second procession which headed up a hill to the family home because in Metsovo, unlike the villages which are ethnically Greek, the women do not go to the cemetery. The grandmother, easily identified, was striking herself on the head in a display of grief.

As the two processions went their separate ways, the square remained quiet and even the children seemed hushed in their play. At such moments it is apparent that in a village the family is not alone in its grief, but feels strongly the bonds that bind it to the rest of the community. Although death does mean separation, the villagers deal with it in a way that reinforces the social ties among the living. And grief has its rituals, too, which come down from prehistoric times. Women are supposed to express themselves loudly and in public, giving outlet to their pent-up emotions and freeing themselves from the repressions that might otherwise build up. Men, too, can cry in public, although they prefer to do it in the presence of other men rather than before women.

In watching the progress of a funeral procession in another village, I noticed that, with its approach, the doors and windows of shops and houses all shut down tightly, but only until the procession passed. Some said this was done "so the evil could not get through" to the living, but people in the village of Terpitsa claimed that they shut the doors so that only the door of the other world would remain open to the dead person.[22]

1:Sanders Z-5,4 (1952-1959) 1962 EH1 Greece EH1

Throughout Greece, even in the cities, people never go to their own home or a friend's home from a funeral without first stopping somewhere for a sweet. In many villages it is the custom to wash one's hands before entering the house.

The official period of mourning lasts for two years. Part of the complex of traits connected with mourning is the Feasts of the Dead held at fixed periods, such as the eighth and the fortieth day after burial. Similarly, on the anniversary of the death a feast of remembrance is held. On such occasions the grave is decorated with flowers, a mass is sung, and offerings of *kollyva* are made in the church. Kollyva is "parboiled wheat mixed with pounded walnuts, raisins and parsley, and covered over with a coating of sugar, with the sign of the cross, and sometimes the initials of the deceased worked on it in raisins. The wheat is interpreted as a symbol of the resurrection: as the grain is buried in the earth, rots, and rises again in the shape of a blooming plant, so will the soul rise from the tomb. . . ." [26]

In addition to these ceremonies for deceased individual members of a family, the Greek villagers also have collective feasts for the dead known as Souls' Sabbath (*psychosavvata*), which correspond roughly with spring and harvest, or the life and death cycle of the year. Relatives visit the graves where they leave sweetmeats, parboiled grain, and cakes, and where they kneel and cry beside the tombs as the priests read prayers over them. It is a memorable experience for a foreigner to come unexpectedly upon a graveyard where as many as one hundred and fifty people are wailing over different graves and to see the priests in their colorful robes and with their swinging censers move from one small group to the next.

Priests when they die are treated differently. With an ordinary person the bowl used when the dead are washed for burial is broken and thrown away; but with the priest (in Spetsai at least) it cannot be broken, but is thrown into the sea. The priest's body is not put in a shroud but is dressed by another priest in a *peritrachelion*, or stole which a priest wears when he hears confessions. Also, the first book from which the priest read after becoming a priest is put in the coffin with him. There is another difference, too. At the end of three years after burial, it is customary to dig up the bones of the deceased and wash them in wine and water, but the bones of a priest are washed with oil. When the bones are disinterred, they are put in a basket and taken home to be put under a table on which there is boiled wheat. The priest reads a prayer; the people kiss the skull, put it in the box with the other bones, and this is put in a vault in the cemetery.

Much is made of the condition of the bones. If they are yellowish-brown, this means that the person lived a good life; if they are black, he lived badly. It is also considered a bad omen if the body has not disintegrated.

An excellent summary of the way the peasant fits death into the general scheme of things comes from a study by V. T. Valassis:

1:Sanders Z-5.4 (1952-1959) 1962 EH1 Greece EH1

346 361 764 [783] [312] Generally, in the old villages the church is in the outskirts. To the back of the church is the cemetery, which is walled to keep out both wild predatory animals and farm animals. For Greeks it is a sin to step on a grave. The church may have a belltower, or the bell may be hung from the branch of an old tree. There is always a well in the churchyard and the cemetery of the old village. It is used as drinking water and for the purification after a burial. The main church of the old village must be the tallest, the largest, and the best-constructed building of the village. This signifies respect for God; the past is not forgotten. This is very much after the pattern of the ancient Greeks who built their shrines as the best buildings while they themselves lived in huts. . . .

Both the church and the cemetery of the old village must be located in a landscape of natural beauty and scenery. Thus faith, worship, and death are in close relation with the natural scenery.[35]

[178] [769] But Valassis adds a discordant note. The new churches are now being constructed in the center of the village, while the cemeteries remain on the outskirts. No longer, therefore, do the peasants, after a Mass or ceremony, go to the graveyard to pay respect to their ancestors.

2:Friedl E-5 (1955-1959) 1963 EH1 Greece EH1
Vasilika

onto the Atalanti road at the BP station will stop here if there are any passengers.

The asphalt and dirt roads are not the only routes by which the village can be approached. The local railroad station of Helikon is just a mile up the highway going toward Kifisokhori. Trains from Athens stop at Helikon at least once a day. The train can also be used to reach Kifisokhori. Thus, a resident of Vasilika can reach any of the main towns of eastern Greece with relative ease and at no great expense, even from the standpoint of his own standard of living.

The same transportation routes which enable the villagers to leave their homes also enable people and products to enter the village. Itinerant vendors of fresh fish, oranges, tomatoes, ice cream, cloth, crockery, sacred pictures, and the like reach Vasilika over these roads. Tinsmiths, blacksmiths, and cobblers use them to come to set up shop for a day or two near one of the coffee houses. The same roads bring gypsies who occasionally pass through the village to beg and to entertain. On the many occasions when family gatherings are in order, the town relatives of the villagers can reach Vasilika with ease.

This description has so far primarily concerned itself with Vasilika's accessibility to town or city centers of commerce, government, and recreation. But there are also paths through the fields and into and over the surrounding hills that lead to the neighboring villages. One can still walk or ride a horse or a donkey to reach these settlements. For the women of Vasilika, these are the important routes. By following them, they can reach the homes of their parents and their daughters, attend the engagements, weddings, and saint's day celebrations in their home villages, and perhaps help out when a daughter has a child. These same paths bring the relatives of Vasilika's women into the village on similar occasions. From the standpoint of the rural economy, this network of paths permits the movement of farm laborers among the villages. Indeed, it is in this way that the postman walks from village to village carrying the mail.

The stress on the many avenues of contact with other people and communities available to Vasilika's population should not lead one to imagine a bustling, busy center with a constant ebb and flow of traffic. The exact nature of movement in and around the village can be better understood if the spatial arrangement of Vasilika's buildings is known. Social relations among the villagers are also affected by these arrangements.

Inside Vasilika

The ridge, on the lowest slopes of which most of the structures are built, lies, as I have said, a half mile from the main highway and somewhat parallel to it. The highway runs from northwest to southeast, Vasilika's ridge from northwest to east. To reach the first village structure, one walks north about three-tenths of a mile on a dirt road leading from the highway. Vineyards and fields are on the right; to the left stands the new one-room schoolhouse built in 1959, with its play yard and surrounding wire fence. A stand of young pines and another of young cypresses, newly planted by the school children, adjoined the schoolhouse in 1961. On the road, past the schoolhouse, a little further to the

2:Friedl E-5 (1955-1959) EH1 Greece EH1
Vasilika

west but on the same side of the road is Vasilika's cemetery. It is a small square area outlined by tall cypresses standing just inside the low stone wall which encloses the graves and the small church of St. Nicholas. Mass is said in this church in celebration of the birthday of its patron saint on December 6th. Sunday afternoon Easter services and funeral ceremonies are also held there.

Past the cemetery the road turns east, runs through the village, and constitutes its main street. Almost all the buildings of Vasilika are ranged for about one-fifth of a mile on both sides of this dirt road. Most of the houses are on the ridge side of the road; a single row of structures lines the field side. As one continues east on the village street and looks to the right on the field side of the road, he first sees fields and then the old school building. The next structure is the main church of the village, the church of St. Athanasius. It is the largest building in the settlement, and, like most of the others, it is constructed of field stone. Regular Sunday masses, Christmas and Easter services, baptisms, weddings, as well as the majority of saint's day and other special liturgies are conducted here by the village priest. The bell in the campanile of St. Athanasius summons the villagers to church, the children to school, and the men to an impromptu public meeting on the rare occasions when one is called to discuss village affairs. And, inevitably, the tolling of the bell announces the death of one of the villagers.

Separated from St. Athanasius by a very narrow alley stands a one-room structure which serves as the office for the village government. It now has a telephone, the only one in the village. Near the village headquarters and still on the field side of the road lives the owner of a combined store and coffeehouse. A ground-floor room of his house contains merchandise such as matches, cigarettes, lemons, salt, sugar, canned vegetables and fish, aspirin and penicillin, thread, and miscellaneous small items, while the outside space in front of the store is reserved for chairs and tables. From this coffeehouse, on the field side of the village, the rest of the structures are homes and their outbuildings, roughly in a line near the road.

Starting now at the western end of the village, and looking east at the ridge side of the road, one sees houses and their outbuildings occupying the lower third of the ridge. The uppermost group of homes were, in 1955, reed huts in which some of the shepherd families lived. Other reed huts served as storage houses. By 1961, the dwelling-huts had all been replaced by new brick houses, already wired for electricity but otherwise in various stages of completion. On the ridge side of the road the only buildings which are not exclusively used as residences are, first, another combined store and coffeehouse, which stands on the street diagonally opposite the first and is also a room in the house of its owner, and second, a nearly completed stone reservoir.

Finally, some two hundred feet past the last house and slightly up the slope, stands the small church of St. Cosmas and St. Damian, the patron saints of the village. Here the village celebrates its *paniyiri*, its patron saints' day festival, on the first of July. Mass is celebrated in the morning, and villagers from the surrounding countryside fill the small edifice to overflowing. Occasionally, other masses are said at this church in the course of the year. Except for the

2: Friedl E-5 (1955-1959) 3 EH1 Greece EH1
Vasilika

[Good Friday]

morning, small boys went from house to house crying, *"Mavros in o uranos,"* "The sky is black," and they were given money or eggs. Meanwhile, the girls of the village worked inside the church covering with wild flowers the sedan-chairlike wooden frame in which an oil painting of Jesus on his bier was to be carried around the village that night. The frame and the icon together are called the *epitafios*. The girls seemed thoroughly to enjoy the morning's work, and they laughed, giggled, jostled each other, and called out orders. Occasionally they sang as they worked. It appeared also as if they were taking particular joy in being inside the church with no men to restrain them. They took turns sprawling over the stalls in which, as females, they rarely sat during a service. They also went up to the chanters' stand and recited some of the cantilations which were to be sung that night—the girls can follow the liturgy only silently during the course of the actual service. Some of the younger girls even dared each other to go behind the panel to the altar, a place forbidden to females, but none actually did. They seemed uneasy and were even frightened at the suggestion.

The church bell rang at 2:20 that afternoon. The priest, with one of the chanters and his son, performed the service in the course of which he brought the icon from behind the altar, covered it with a white cloth and placed it in its bower. In accordance with the symbolic re-enactment of the event, only the women and girls (and a few schoolboys) were in the church at the time. Once the icon was in place and strewn with flowers, the priest and then the children went up to kiss it. The priest explained that it should be done slowly and deliberately, exactly as it was done for the dead in the village funeral rituals.

Good Friday services began that night at 9:00. At 11:00 the *epitafios* was carried out of the church by four boys. These marched in procession with the *epitafios* behind boys carrying the *lavara* (standards). Behind the *epitafios* walked the priest and the chanters. The rest of the villagers followed holding candles to light the way as the *epitafios* was carried around the entire village. As the bells of the three village churches pealed, and the children chanted *"Enas ine o theos"* and *"Panayia dhespina,"* "God is one" and "Our Lady, the All Holy One," the villagers picked their way carefully over the stones and ruts as they climbed the hillside, circled the whole settlement, and climbed down again on the other side. When the procession reached the church door once more, the boys held the bier high so that the returning congregation passed into the church under it. The service was over shortly after midnight.

On Holy Saturday, sweet Easter breads with red eggs inside were displayed, other eggs were dyed red, last minute finishing touches were given to Easter clothes and last house-cleaning chores were completed. Some people slaughtered the Easter lamb on Saturday, others waited until Sunday. In the meantime, field chores went on as usual. Everyone rested for a few hours, from about 9:00 Saturday night until the Easter Sunday services began shortly after midnight. These lasted until 4:00 in the morning, with two periods of climax. The first occurred when all the lights in the church were put out and the priest kindled the new light. The boys rushed up to see who could be the first to light his own candle from that of the priest's. They said the winner would be the first of the boys to be married. The rest of the congregation then lit its

2:Edmonds T-3 (1926?) 1927 E13 Balkan Peoples
Greece EH1

Priestcraft

the little shrine which shelters the sarcophagus of Spiridione, 771
to kneel there and pray. The evident genuineness of their faith was impressive, and I began to feel rather ashamed of the vulgar curiosity which was the chief reason for my presence.

The great moment arrived, and we in our turn went 764
into the shrine. The sarcophagus[1] rich with embossed silverwork and jewels, shone in the light of the candles which surrounded it. It stood on a raised dais or step, and seemed to fill the whole space, so big was it and so small the shrine. We four stood in a row, with our backs to the entrance. There was room for us and for one other worshipper, and no more. The latter, a woman, knelt devoutly in the gloom beside us. One by one my companions crossed themselves and reverently kissed the sarcophagus. Then we waited in silence.

The priest and his acolyte came in by a side door. The 769
priest, a tall and exceedingly good-looking man of grave mien and dignified aspect, took up his position at one end of the sarcophagus. The acolyte stood at the other. With slow and reverent movements, the priest unlocked the lid, raised it, and let down the side which faced us. He then opened a square panel in the upper surface of the coffin, and placed near it a saucer containing something that resembled dried leaves, possibly a disinfectant. Each gesture, each deliberate movement, conveyed the idea of intense devotion and intense reverence—and yet this man, this officiating priest, was actually the owner of the relics before him, and

1[of Spiridione, see cat. 46, pp. 149-151 --Analyst]